

Maine EMS Exam Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 16, 2006

De Champlain Conference Room, Augusta

Minutes

Present: Joanne LeBrun (via videoconference), Kelly Roderick
Bill Zito, Bob Hawkes, Trisha Coleman

Absent: Rick Doughty, Travis Norsworthy, Jacky Vaniotis – Chair, Gary Utgard

Guest:

Staff: Drexell White

1. Call To Order - The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m.

Bob Hawkes informed the committee that he is now the father of twins – a boy and a girl.

A. Assign Timekeeper – Trisha

B. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda – None

2. Minutes – D. White apologized that the April minutes were not ready. They will be available for the next meeting.

3. Old Business

A. Computer Adaptive Testing/Task Analysis

Staff reported that the executive summary on Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT) has been presented to the Board, with action expected at the Board's June meeting. Questions from the Board included location of test sites, hours of operation and what is the possibility of using a third party exam like Massachusetts. There was also (Board) discussion concerning information provided by Director Jay Bradshaw's that several state EMS offices have likewise been looking to options for written testing that may or may not include the NREMT CAT.

The committee then developed a list of additional questions for NREMT and Pearson Vue:

1. What are the hours of operation for the Pearson Vue Test/Service Centers?
2. Will the sites be open during non-traditional hours in order to accommodate students in the evening and on weekends
3. Does being open from 8 – 5 mean that I can come in for an exam at 4:45 p.m. or will the last acceptance time be earlier so the facility can close at 5:00 pm?
4. Are there additional costs for conducting tests off hours (i.e, nights and weekends)?
5. Can the class Instructor schedule special exams?
6. What is the agreement length between NREMT and Pearson Vue?
7. What are the capacities of the Maine Pearson Vue Test Centers?
8. What is the turnaround time for exam scores?
9. How are students notified of pass/fail status?
10. Does the Registry provide a numeric score or is it pass/fail?

11. What items are contained in the NREMT exam that cannot be found in the 1994 National Standard Curriculum?
12. What is the timeline for the DVD training.

There are currently 2 Pearson Vue Test Centers in Westbrook and Bangor, with an affiliate center at Northern Maine Community College. Drexell White reported that should the Board approve CAT at the First Responder and EMT-B levels, sites would be sought in Machias and Augusta. Kelly Roderick stated that having that information is important for the fall course planning.

There was further discussion about test sign –up, scoring and results reporting to the student.

Staff will compile the questions and forward them to NREMT and Pearson Vue.

Joanne Lebrun complimented staff for the CAT executive summary and Gary Utgard for his CAT presentation at the last Board meeting. She also asked if it would be possible to have a NREMT representative join next month's Board meeting by speaker phone; staff will check on that possibility.

B. Paramedic Practical Exam

Bob Hawkes, who administers the NREMT Paramedic exam through his program at Southern Maine Community College, gave an overview of the NREMT Paramedic practical exam, since there exists an option of using the CAT at the Paramedic level. Points made by Bob during his presentation:

- The NREMT practical exam process is similar to the Maine Paramedic practical, except that NREMT adds a couple of specific stations.
- There is a trauma station that is similar to Maine's current exam
- There is an adult ventilation/intubation station, and a combitube station (combitubes are not currently in the Maine EMS practical).
- The cardiology station is broken up into dynamic and static stations. The dynamic is a "megacode" type station, while the static station presents four static ECG strips to the students and asks the student to evaluate and verbalize strip interpretation and treatment of the patient based upon the information provided.
- There are two oral stations in which the student is presented with patient information. The student then verbalizes the assessment and treatment process by asking the evaluator questions about the patient; based upon patient presentation and information feedback, the student verbalizes patient treatment. The student is also asked a pathophysiology question. Bob stated that the scenarios are very straightforward. The oral stations are the most unique to the Maine system, but Bob stated they have experienced no problems delivering it in Maine.
- There is an IV setup and IV bolus station. The student sets up an IV and then delivers a bolus of medication.
- There is a pediatric intubation station and a pediatric intraosseous station;
- There is a random basic station – picked by class. The options are spinal seated, spinal supine and bleeding and shock station.

The stations are set up as 7 – 8 stations. Critical skills are must pass, lest the student fail the station.

Bob stated that a NREMT representative runs the exam and scores the exam, while Bob lines up the examiners. He stated that an examiner need not be a Nationally Registered Paramedic, just that he or she is an experienced Paramedic.

Fees are set by each site. Bob stated that he charges \$95.00 to “break-even”. Fees for the NREMT Rep is paid by the NREMT.

Students take the written and practical exam on separate days, although Bob said that New Hampshire conducts both in a single day.

Members were reminded that the committee has accepted the NREMT Paramedic and I-99 exams as being equivalent to Maine’ exam.

A straw poll was taken and each region conducts an average of 15 students, some each year and some every other year. Bob states that SMCC tests approximately 40 Paramedics per year. It was estimated that approximately 100 Paramedic candidates are tested each year.

Exam registration is done online by the course sponsor and students may register online or by paper. Student cost to the Registry is \$50.00.

Bob stated that Jerry Kitchen is the NREMT representative that conducts the Paramedic exam.

Consensus was that the NREMT paramedic practical has been approved as equivalent, so the question boils down to whether delivering the NREMT practical is more difficult to administer than the Maine practical.

It was suggested that current (Paramedic) programs could use the paper and pencil exam with new programs using the NREMT exam.

Joanne suggested that contacting the (limited) number of Paramedic course sponsors and instructors would be appropriate in order to understand any concerns about switching to the NREMT.

Stakeholders identified were the ALS ICs, Educations Committee and course sponsors.

Staff will send a letter with high points from Bob’s presentation.

C. IPE Evaluations/ Concerns

Discussion concerned the upcoming joint education and exam meeting on June 14, 2006, to review the Integrated Practical Exam and make recommendations for improvement.

Drexell White will speak with Dan Batsie about the time of the meeting. The education committee has gone to afternoon meetings, but exam usually meets in the morning. Consensus was that a morning meeting is preferable.

The exam committee will deliver an overview of the IPEs to date (e.g., number, locations, evaluations), to include:

- Number
- Locations
- Evaluations
- Use or non-use of the “critical skills” section is one subject that continues to be raised.
- Problem-solving (e.g, handling an instructor who is not prepared)

There was extensive discussion about the recent situation where an IPE had to be canceled because of lack of Practical Test Assistants.

The committee then discussed the current IPE system vs. the old system and the future of practical testing.

D. “3 Strikes” Policy

Drexell White reported that he has had not heard back from the education committee regarding its positions on the proposed 3 strikes policy.

E. ALS IPE – Nothing to Report**F. Paramedic Written Exam**

The committee discussed switching to the NREMT written exam for Paramedic. Further discussion is needed once the results of the Paramedic Practical Exam survey are known. Since the NREMT exam is accepted as equivalent to Maine’s current Paramedic written and practical, Paramedic courses have the option of setting up a NREMT Paramedic exam for their classes in lieu of a “Maine” test.

5. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 16, 2006, at 9:30 a.m. in the de Champlain conference room at Maine EMS in Augusta.

A. Set Agenda

1. Computer Adaptive Testing
2. IPE Evaluations/ Concerns
3. “3 Strikes” Policy -
4. ALS IPE
5. Paramedic Written Exam

6. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Drexell White